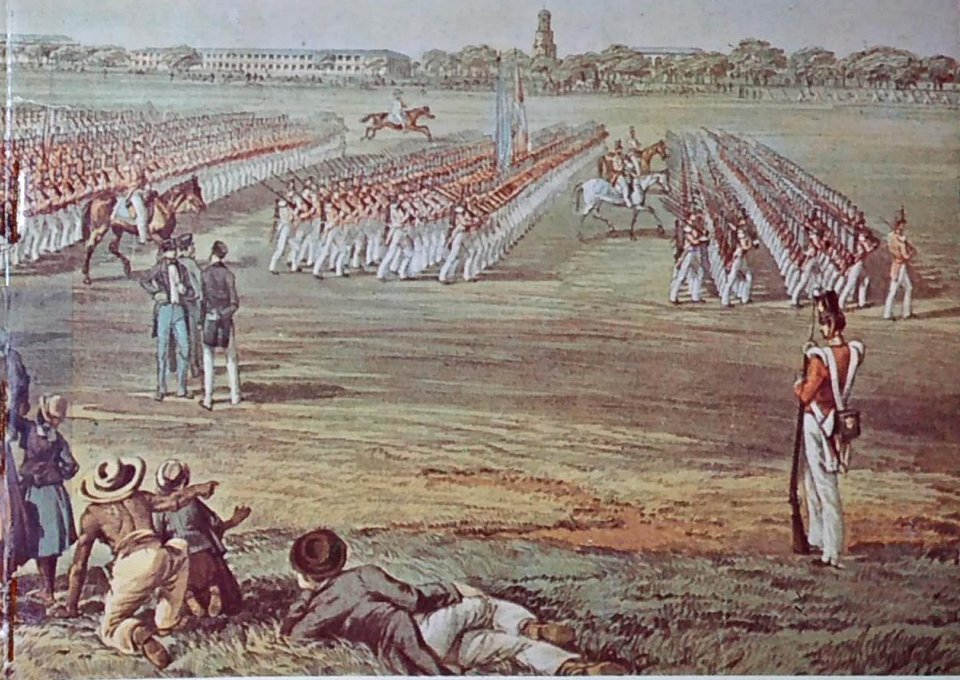


# An Outline of Barbados History

P.F. CAMPBELL



*The Savannah, Barbados*



— The Morgan Lewis Mill —

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## PREFACE

Most travellers want to know something about the history of the places they visit. This booklet aims to tell them a little about the history of Barbados.

If I seem to have devoted a disproportionate amount of space to the background to English settlement in the West Indies, it is because I believe the reader will find it interesting. On the other hand, I make no excuse for having said so little of the important developments of the last thirty years. The visitor will find plenty of Barbadians ready to discuss these, and he must form his own judgement after listening to accounts which will inevitably differ widely in interpretation and emphasis.

Dr. W.K. Marshall and Mrs. Monica Skeete have been good enough to read this booklet in typescript. I am grateful to them for many helpful suggestions and to Dr. Colin Hudson for assistance with the section on sugar production.

I hope that some readers will have their interest in Barbados history sufficiently stimulated that they will wish to know more. I have therefore added "Suggestions for Further Reading", confining my selections to books which are still in print or are likely to be reprinted shortly.

P.F. Campbell

November, 1973

### *Notes on Illustrations*

The cover illustration is of one of a pair of prints of St. Ann's Garrison and the Savannah, Barbados. It is stated on the prints that they were made by E. Walker from daguerreotypes of W.H. Freeman, M.D. in November, 1853. A watercolour exists from which the other print in the pair seems to have been made. On the mount it is stated that the artist was W.H. Freeman and that it was painted in 1852. The length of exposure required for daguerreotypes, and the absence of colour, would have made them poor material for the printmaker unless supplemented by further pictorial or other data.

Ligon's Map was, in fact, almost certainly made by Captain Swan about 1640, though the embellishments were probably added by Ligon himself. It was published in Ligon's History in 1657.

### *Acknowledgement*

Permission to publish is gratefully acknowledged to The Barbados Museum & Historical Society for the cover illustration. Plantations Ltd., and Willie Alleyne Associates for photo of Carlisle Bay.

## SPAIN IN THE NEW WORLD

The first settlement by Europeans in Barbados was made by Englishmen, and in the three and a half centuries of its recorded history the Island has never been occupied by any other power. In this respect it is unique among the islands of the Caribbean. It is not easy to identify all the factors that have contributed to give Barbados this distinction, but among them were Spanish greed and the trade winds and ocean currents.

After the discovery of the New World by Columbus in 1492, the ownership of all newly-discovered territory was granted to Spain and Portugal by papal bull, and subsequently by treaty. An imaginary line was drawn in the Atlantic, and all land west of the line was granted to Spain, all land to the east to Portugal. In the result the Caribbean became a Spanish sea, and was to remain so until the seventeenth century, while Portugal had to be content with a settlement in Brazil.

The first islands of any size discovered by Columbus were those of the Greater Antilles - Hispaniola, Cuba, Jamaica and Puerto Rico - and these provided more than enough land for the Spaniards' immediate needs. The smaller islands to the east were left largely undisturbed. Spanish vessels outward bound usually made a landfall at Guadeloupe or Dominica, and sometimes called there for water, but otherwise the Spaniards' only interest in these islands was as a reservoir of labour: their inhabitants were removed to replenish the labour force in the larger islands, which dwindled rapidly as a result of famine and disease and the effects of contact of a primitive people with a more highly civilized master race.

The Spaniards had not come to the West Indies to find land for settlement and the growing of crops. From the start they believed that the New World would yield an inexhaustible supply of precious metals, and their belief was confirmed when Cortez reached the court of Montezuma in Mexico and, even more so, when Pizarro discovered the silver mines of Peru. Henceforth everything was subordinated to the extraction of treasure and its safe transportation to Spain. The settlements in the islands were retained, but their principal value was as staging posts for the treasure fleet and as military and naval bases; for encroachment by foreign powers in any part of the area had to be prevented at all costs.

### THE CHALLENGE TO SPANISH SUPREMACY

It was only as the seventeenth century opened that England showed an interest in establishing settlements overseas. The East India Company received its charter in 1600; the first permanent colony in Virginia was founded in 1607; and in 1620 the Pilgrim Fathers landed in Massachusetts. Meanwhile, on the coast of Guiana, small parties of English, French and Dutch were struggling to extract a livelihood from the soil by the cultivation of tobacco and tropical crops. One of those en-

gaged in this, an Englishman, Thomas Warner, thought he could do better if he transferred his activities to one of the islands of the Lesser Antilles. His settlement in St. Christopher (now usually known as St. Kitts) was the first English settlement in the West Indies.

The event is of historical importance because it marks the abandonment by Spain of any serious claim to the islands of the Lesser Antilles; her age as a great maritime power was over. When the English and the French, and to a lesser extent the Dutch, occupied the Lesser Antilles, the Spanish naval forces in the area were too weak to prevent them. Once, in 1629, a Spanish expedition sacked St. Kitts and Nevis, but having done so it withdrew. In any case, because the trade winds in the Caribbean blow from the east, navigation from west to east was so slow in the days of sailing ships that the normal route for eastbound vessels was northward along the east coast of Florida until they picked up the westerlies. This accident of geography had important consequences in the history of the area, and it gave the Lesser Antilles, and in particular Barbados, virtual immunity from attack from the west.

### THE SETTLEMENT OF BARBADOS

Within a year or two of Warner's settlement in St. Kitts a party of Englishmen landed in Barbados. In 1625 an English ship returning from a trading voyage to Brazil touched at Barbados and took formal possession of the island in the name of James I, King of England. On his return to England the captain, John Powell, reported this to his employer, William Courteen, and in February, 1627, an expedition despatched by Courteen and commanded by Henry Powell landed at what is now Hometown, but which was first christened Jamestown. The party consisted of between 40 and 80 persons and was followed by a second shipload shortly afterwards.

Barbados was then completely uninhabited. Archaeological evidence indicates that at one time all the islands of the Lesser Antilles, including Barbados, had settlements of Arawak Indians and there are traces of an even earlier culture in Barbados. By the time of the arrival of Columbus the Arawaks had retreated northwards before the more warlike Caribs, one of whose practices was to take Arawak women as secondary wives. We know that the Caribs had driven the Arawaks from Barbados before the arrival of the Spaniards in the West Indies, and we can be fairly certain that the Island still had a Carib population in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. We do not know exactly when Barbados lost its Caribs, nor the reason for their departure. The fact that Barbados was the only island that was uninhabited adds to the mystery. Nevertheless the absence of a hostile Carib population made the Island more attractive for settlement, and it helps to explain why of all the islands Barbados developed the quickest.

What the settlers found was an island of 166 square miles, shaped roughly like a leg of mutton, rising in terraces from the south and west to a central plateau 1,000 feet above sea level, and completely covered in forest. The forest was full of wild hogs, the ancestors of which, according to oral tradition, had been left there years before by a passing Portuguese ship to provide food for shipwrecked mariners. As early as 1511 the Island is referred to as "Isla de los Barbados" (island of the bearded ones) in an official Spanish document, and in subsequent maps it is usually given this name or variants of it, but sometimes it is called St. Bernard. None of the explanations put forward for the name are altogether convincing; even the most plausible explanation, that it refers to the bearded fig trees, is open to the objection that these trees would hardly have been noticeable from the sea.

John Powell had taken possession of the Island in the name of the King of England. It was the practice in those days for the King to farm out his right of government of overseas colonies by the issue of what were called proprietary patents, the recipients of which were usually persons of influence and importance. Courteen made the serious mistake of despatching an expedition to Barbados before a patent had been issued. A few months after the first shiploads of settlers arrived, Charles I issued a patent to the Earl of Marlborough, who made it over to the Earl of Carlisle. During Carlisle's absence from England the Earl of Montgomery (later Earl of Pembroke), instigated by Courteen, persuaded the King to revoke the Carlisle patent and issue one to him. On his return Carlisle got this decision reversed and the status quo restored, and sent his own representative to Barbados to govern the Island on his behalf. For a while there were open hostilities between the Carlisle faction and the Courteen (Montgomery) faction, but ultimately the latter had to yield, and the followers of Courteen either departed or accepted the new master.

When Henry Powell and his party landed in February, 1627, Powell himself did not stay long. He and a few others sailed straight for Guiana, where they obtained from the Dutch a large variety of tropical plants from which food crops could be grown, and also some Arawak Indians to teach the settlers how to grow them. This was the key to the settlement's successful start.

The Earl of Carlisle received an income from Barbados in the form of dues paid on exports, and it was therefore in his interest that the land should be developed as quickly as possible. A grant of 10,000 acres was made to a group of London merchants, and, perhaps because the big mercantile interests of London were concerned in the venture, people poured into Barbados from England in the early years of the settlement. These consisted on the one hand of young men of good family looking to make a quick fortune, and on the other of indentured labourers pledged to work for their masters for a period of years. In the conditions that existed it is hardly surprising that they were a rough crowd, and Sir Henry Colt, who visited the Island in 1631, found them a quarrelsome lot,



drinking intoxicating liquor to excess. He was glad to get away from "an island of discord". The first settlers also showed irresponsibility and lack of foresight by indulging in frequent pigsticking expeditions, so that within a few years a valuable source of food was exhausted.

Bridgetown (or the Bridge, as it was originally called) became the principal port and the administrative and commercial capital. Though the Governor was appointed by the Earl of Carlisle, he was required to govern constitutionally, and in the making and administration of laws he acted with a Council of 12 members. In 1639 a Lower House of elected members (the House of Assembly) was added, and Barbados had a form of legislature that has remained unchanged to the present day.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: THE YEARS OF TRIAL AND ERROR

There is no reason to think that the first settlers in Barbados had any preconceived ideas about the sort of crops they would grow. They accepted what the Dutch in Guiana had to offer, and this seems to have consisted of a wide variety. Tobacco was selected as the main cash crop, with cotton as the next in importance. Unfortunately the tobacco grown in Barbados was much inferior to that in Virginia, and within a few years England took steps to discourage tobacco cultivation in Barbados, first by imposing a quota on imports and then by charging a higher duty than was charged on Virginian tobacco. Once again Barbados received valuable assistance from the Dutch.

The revolt of the Netherlands against their Spanish masters and the rise of the Dutch Republic in the second half of the sixteenth century had important results. By the end of the century the Dutch dominated the carrying trade of the world and Amsterdam had superseded Antwerp as one of the great centres of international commerce. In the early history of Barbados there is repeated reference to the assistance given by the Dutch and the advantages in trading with them: they often paid better prices, they would purchase the tobacco that England would not accept, and their ships bought for cash on the spot. In spite of all this it became increasingly apparent that an economy based on tobacco could not indefinitely sustain the growing population. It was the Dutch who made possible the introduction of a sugar economy, and in all probability it was the Dutch who suggested it.

The Portuguese had been making sugar on the north-east coast of Brazil since the end of the sixteenth century and had an almost complete monopoly of European markets. In 1630 the Dutch seized Pernambuco, and the following years saw a great expansion of production, though it seems that the actual operation of the industry remained in the hands of the Portuguese colonists working under Dutch direction. According to one account, sugar cane was brought to Barbados by a Dutchman in 1637, but it was not until the 1640s that the manufacture of sugar was started.

The manufacture of sugar required a much heavier capital investment than the Barbados settlers could afford, and little help was forthcoming from England, which was engulfed in civil war. The Dutch gladly stepped into the breach, and supplied not only finance and expertise but also a market for the sugar. England would hardly have permitted this strengthening of ties between Barbados and the Dutch if she had not been so preoccupied with her own domestic problems; nor would she have been likely to risk such heavy initial investment in an industry about which she knew nothing. The English Civil War may therefore have contributed indirectly to the Island's prosperity.

The switch to a sugar economy is the most important event in Barbados history. Economically it led to a period of prosperity which could not have been achieved otherwise; socially it resulted in most of the British possessions in the West Indies having a population that is predominantly of African descent. The Spaniards had been importing slaves into the West Indies for over a century, but in Barbados slaves had been very little used for field labour, and the number employed as domestics was quite small. The cultivation of sugar cane was more arduous work than the cultivation of tobacco and cotton, and it required a much larger labour force. In a very short time almost the whole labour force of the sugar industry consisted of slaves. For over a century and a half the traffic in slaves from the west coast of Africa continued unabated. To modern generations everything connected with slavery, and in particular with the slave trade, is abominable, and it is difficult to understand how it took so long for the cruelty and the callous disregard of human life to prick the public conscience. On the other hand, it is interesting to speculate how differently the West Indies might have developed if there had been no supply of African slaves.

## COMMONWEALTH, PROTECTORATE AND RESTORATION

When Charles I was dead and a Commonwealth had been proclaimed, the authorities in England were able to turn their attention to their overseas possessions. Most of those in positions of responsibility in Barbados were Royalist and declared for Charles II. The English Parliament promptly passed an Act prohibiting all trade with Barbados and certain other rebel colonies. In the following year, 1651, the first of the Navigation Acts made it illegal for goods from a foreign country to enter England or her colonies except in English ships or ships of the producing country. This was to be no temporary measure. Until well into the nineteenth century Britain was to adhere firmly to the policy of mercantilism, which was based on the theory that wealth consists in the possession of precious metals, and that a country should therefore limit imports from foreign countries to a minimum, and at the same time export as much as possible.

Commonwealth England could not subdue Royalist Barbados simply by passing legislation, and a naval expedition was despatched in 1651 under Sir George Ayscue to bring back the Island to allegiance. The islanders held out for several months, but without any prospect of outside help their cause was hopeless, and in January 1652 a peace was signed at the Mermaid Tavern in Oistins. The "Charter of Barbados", which embodied the terms and conditions of the cessation of hostilities, is a remarkable document. It owes something to Magna Carta, and something also perhaps to the English Petition of Right of 1628. It is a little ironical that a charter of civil liberties such as would have delighted men like Pym and Hampden was being extracted by the adherents of the very king who had so strongly resisted yielding up more power to the representatives of the people.

The greatest deprivation Barbados suffered during the Commonwealth and Protectorate was the loss of the right to trade with the Dutch. The Government in England certainly tried to enforce the ban, but for some years the trade continued almost unabated, and even at the end of the Commonwealth there are doubts whether it was strictly enforced. The restoration of the monarchy in 1660 passed off quietly, but it was a severe disappointment when, within months of the King's return, a new Navigation Act was passed. Worse was to follow. Though by agreement the proprietary patent (which had been in abeyance during the Protectorate) was allowed to expire, so that future Governors became answerable directly to the Crown, the Barbados Legislature was persuaded to pass an Act granting to the Crown the proceeds of a duty of  $4\frac{1}{2}\%$  on all exports. According to the terms of the Act, the money was to cover certain expenditure incurred in or in connection with Barbados. In practice much of it was spent on pensions to persons entirely unconnected with the Island. There were repeated outcries and representations, but the Act remained in force for 175 years.

The year 1660 can be taken as the point at which Barbados reached its apogee of prosperity. Virtually the whole of the forest cover had been removed, and most of the land was under sugar cultivation. The landscape cannot have looked very different from what it does today. There were fewer houses, and most of the buildings were of wood; everywhere there were windmills, which contributed so much to the beauty of the countryside; and of course there was no mechanical transport. Barbados had an importance entirely out of proportion to her size; she was possibly still the most important of England's overseas possessions, and in the Caribbean she certainly had no rival. There were English settlements in Nevis, Antigua and Montserrat, but these were slow in developing. The French were in Guadeloupe, Martinique and Grenada. The Dutch held a few small islands, and St. Kitts was shared by the English and the French. Except for Trinidad, which was nominally Spanish, and Tobago, which had changed hands several times and continued to change hands for another century and a half, the rest of the Lesser Antilles were for the moment left to the Caribs.

In 1660 and for some years thereafter, Barbados still received a good price for her sugar, because England could consume all that Barbados could produce. Such a state of affairs was seldom to occur again except when Britain's supplies were interrupted by war. In 1654 Cromwell had conceived his Western Design, which was a scheme to capture the Spanish West Indian possessions. A fleet under Penn and Venables sailed for Hispaniola, calling at Barbados on the way to pick up reinforcements. The attack on Hispaniola failed, and the expedition went on to Jamaica, which was almost undefended. It was in this way that Jamaica became a British possession. Her development was slow at first, but she was many times the size of Barbados, and by the end of the seventeenth century her production of sugar had increased so as to cause a lowering of sugar prices on the English and European markets. At the same time the French territories of Guadeloupe and Martinique became serious competitors. Though their sugar could not be shipped to England, their production costs were lower than those of Barbados, whose soil was showing signs of exhaustion, and this was reflected in sugar prices generally. By 1689 Barbados planters were complaining that the prices their sugar could fetch barely met production costs. Their cries fell on deaf ears.

## THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The history of Barbados in the seventeenth century is the story of a struggle for survival followed by consolidation and economic and political growth. By 1700 the Island's character had been formed, and it has remained basically unchanged except in the social field. Constitutionally and culturally British influence has been dominant, and the name "Little England", which Barbados acquired, was apposite. In its domestic development the eighteenth century was a period of almost complete stagnation, politically, economically and socially. Politically, by the time the century opened, the Legislature had achieved a large measure of success in its battle with the Crown for the sole right to legislate. Economically, the Island retained sugar as its main crop and only important source of income. Socially, the division of the population into a plantocracy and a labour force consisting mainly of African slaves continued, and there was hardly any sign of the emergence of a middle class. The real importance of the eighteenth century in the history of Barbados lies in the effects upon it of the succession of wars in which Britain was engaged.

## RELATIONS WITH NORTH AMERICA

The settlement of Barbados and the first English settlements



in North America had occurred almost simultaneously, and from the beginning there were close trading relationships between them. When the Civil War in England disrupted the latter's trade with her overseas possessions, Barbados relied more and more on the American colonies for foodstuffs, horses, lumber and suchlike; and in exchange she supplied there were many Barbadians owning property and occupying high positions in North America. They played an important part, for example, in the colonization of Carolina, several of whose Governors came from Barbadian families. Of North American visitors to Barbados the best known is George Washington, who came with his brother Lawrence in the winter of 1751-2 on account of Lawrence's health. The only thing that occurred to mar the visit was George's contraction of smallpox.

The wars of the eighteenth century caused North America and Barbados to draw even closer together, because England could not supply many commodities which Barbados had obtained from there. Moreover, though most Barbados sugar still went to England, almost all her rum and molasses went to the New England colonies. This happy state of affairs ceased abruptly when the American colonies rebelled and became enemy territory. Unfortunately the cessation of hostilities in 1783 did not restore the status quo, because the Navigation Acts made trade with the United States illegal unless cargoes were carried in British ships; and this condition was unacceptable to the Americans. Full commercial relations with the United States were not resumed until 1830, and from then until the end of the century the United States almost monopolised the provision trade of Barbados. The valuable export trade in rum and molasses, which was lost during the American Revolution, was never recovered, and by the middle of the nineteenth century total domestic exports from Barbados to the United States were worth only a few hundred pounds a year.

Trade with Canada had always been a small part of the trade with North America. Direct sea communications were totally inadequate, so that most Canadian exports were shipped through United States ports, and the existence until 1867 of separate provinces, each with its own Customs tariff, added to the difficulties of West Indian exporters. A delegation consisting of Commissioners from the five provinces of what was soon to be Canada visited Barbados in 1866, and useful discussions were held. The institution of a shipping service removed one of the obstacles, but it was not until the beginning of the present century that there began the close trade relationship between Canada and the West Indies that still exists. Even then the initiative came from the West Indies. The credit belongs to Sir Daniel Morris, Commissioner of Agriculture for the West Indies, who had his headquarters in Barbados. He realized the importance of Canada as a market for West Indian agricultural products, and his efforts to interest the Canadian authorities culminated in a conference held in Barbados in 1908 and the appointment by the Canadian Government of a Trade Commissioner in the West Indies.

## THE CONSTITUTIONAL HERITAGE

The Englishmen who established a settlement in Barbados brought with them English law and English political institutions. Over the centuries very little has changed in this respect. In the courts of law practice and procedure differ hardly at all from that of the courts in England; English traditions are maintained and judges and barristers wear the same robes as their English counterparts. This is also true of the two Houses of the Legislature.

From the beginning Barbados has been proud of her constitution, and with the passage of time her pride in it has intensified. The House of Assembly is the oldest elected legislative chamber in the West Indies, and for over 300 years it has exercised powers similar to those of the English House of Commons; one of the provisions of the Charter of Barbados of 1652, for example, made the consent of the House of Assembly necessary for the imposition of any taxation. Though the Crown, acting through the Governor, could achieve much by administrative direction and by the use of its right of veto of legislation, it could not insist on legislation being passed.

A constitution similar to that of Barbados was granted to all the the West Indian territories which became British possessions during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This was known as the old representative system. During the Napoleonic wars Britain acquired Trinidad, St. Lucia and the three territories which later became British Guiana; these had previously been Spanish, French and Dutch respectively. In British Guiana the old Dutch constitution was retained in a modified form, but in Trinidad and St. Lucia Britain introduced Crown colony government, namely one legislative body with a majority pledged to vote for Government measures, so that there was in effect direct rule by the Crown.

After emancipation it became clear to the British Government that the old representative system should either be adapted to the new state of things or be abolished and replaced by Crown colony government. It was anomalous that in a free society all power should be in the hands of a small section of the population. While the need for change was recognized, very little was done to bring it about. Eventually, in 1865, the Jamaica Legislature relieved the British Government of the necessity for taking the action over which it had been procrastinating. A rising among the black population led to the recall of Governor Eyre, and the Jamaica Legislature asked for its own dissolution. The old constitution was replaced by Crown colony government; and, fortified by the ease with which the change had been made in Jamaica, the British Government made similar changes in the constitutions of every West Indian colony except Barbados.

Why was the Barbados constitution the only one to survive? The acceptance of Crown colony government by the smaller islands is understandable, because there was no such long, unbroken tradition of constitutional government under the British Crown. But one might have expected Jamaica to resist rather than to welcome such a retrograde step. That it did not do so is probably attributable mainly to apathy and fear on the part of the white population. Many more estates in Jamaica than in Barbados had absentee owners, and by 1865 there were few men of position who were possessed of a sense of public service or national pride. The proportion of black to white was twice what it was in Barbados, and there was always the possibility of further black uprisings. Moreover, the existence of a large class of independent peasant proprietors presaged a gradual transfer of power from the white to the black population.

Barbados kept her constitution because she never gave the British Government sufficient excuse to revoke it. When the latter did attempt what seemed to it a relatively minor change, the reaction was strong and immediate. In 1877 the Governor proposed to the Legislature that the Colonial Secretary and the Attorney-General should be given the right to sit in the House of Assembly without having to be elected, so that they could conduct Government business there. Considerable heat was generated, the sanctity of the electoral principle was invoked, and amid great enthusiasm the "Nominee Bill", as it was called, was rejected. One change was made shortly afterwards, but this gave greater power to the elected representatives of the people. By the Executive Committee Act of 1881 the Governor was required to appoint four Members of the House of Assembly and one Member of the Legislative Council to sit with the Executive Council. This body, under the Governor's chairmanship, exercised the executive power.

Today there is universal franchise in Barbados, and in theory the powers of the House of Assembly are greater than they ever have been, because the Senate (which has replaced the Council) can in the last resort only delay the passage of legislation. One of the features of Cabinet government, however, is the transfer of power from the Legislature to the Executive. This process has taken place in Barbados. Many of the powers which were formerly exercised by the Legislature itself are now vested in the Cabinet or even in individual Ministers.

## THE BARBADIANS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

We are fortunate that Richard Ligon has left us an account of his life in Barbados from 1647-50, when he assisted in the management of Kendal plantation, which is about eight miles inland from Bridgetown. Ligon speaks of his fellow planters in the highest terms, but he admits that the spirit of harmony gave way to discord after his departure. Much

of the forest still remained, and the plantations were clearings in it. All produce and merchandise was carried on the backs of horses, donkeys and camels, and the paths were so rough that in the wet weather only the donkeys could pick their way between the tree roots and up and down the steep sides of the gullies. Social life was necessarily restricted, and there were no outdoor sports, but everybody met on Sundays at the parish church, where attendance was compulsory. Sunday was also the day of rest for the slaves, who passed the time in singing and dancing and in cultivating their own plots.

The one luxury the planters allowed themselves was a good table, and this must have compensated somewhat for the lonely and hard life, poor houses and general lack of amenities. Ligon gives a long list of delicacies, both local and imported, and also of local drinks and imported wines. For the next two centuries the standard and quantity of food and drink in planters' houses was the subject of invariable comment by visitors. Madeira was the most popular wine and was drunk both alone and in sangaree; it is the one wine that improves and does not deteriorate in a hot climate. The rum of those days was a much heavier drink than the rum of today, and though the planters had their punch, rum was mainly the drink of the lower classes. It was not until 1775 that rum replaced brandy as the spirit ration of the British navy.

While the felling of trees to clear land for cultivation continued, the majority of buildings were of wood. None of these have survived. The earliest stone buildings still in occupation are Nicholas Abbey and Drax Hall, both of which were erected in the second half of the seventeenth century. Most of the other buildings that predate the nineteenth century have been altered out of recognition. A good example is Government House, originally Pilgrim, which became the official residence of the Governor in 1703. Destruction by termites, by hurricanes and, particularly in Bridgetown, by fire has accounted for the loss of many of the old houses. The hurricanes of 1675, 1780 and 1831 caused devastation, the extent of which is illustrated by the fate of the eleven parish churches, stone buildings stoutly constructed by the standards of the time. All but two of these are known to have been demolished either in 1780 or in 1831, and in several cases churches rebuilt after 1780 were again demolished.

Father Labat, a French priest who visited Barbados in 1700, was much impressed by Bridgetown, and several subsequent visitors wrote in equally enthusiastic terms. The streets were long and clean, the houses were well built and magnificently furnished, and the shops and warehouses were filled with goods of every kind from all parts of the world. Incidentally, Labat considered the planters' houses even finer than those in the town. One can understand his enthusiasm if one studies the print by a Dutchman, Samuel Copen, in 1695, entitled *A Prospect of Bridge Town* (of which there is a copy in the Barbados Museum). Behind a fleet at anchor in Carlisle Bay there are the forts and wharves,



and behind these a tightly packed mass of buildings three and four storeys high. The only town in the West Indies to compare with it was Port Royal in Jamaica, and that was destroyed by an earthquake in 1692.

The Bridgetown of Copen's print was almost completely destroyed by fire in 1766, but the network of streets and alleys in the middle of the town has survived with very little change. There were two further disastrous fires, one at each end of the town, in the nineteenth century, and one of these made possible the erection of the Public Buildings adjoining Trafalgar Square and the opening up of the area between them and the Carenage.

Retail shops as we know them hardly existed until the nineteenth century. There were small hucksters' shops, usually kept by free coloured persons, catering to the needs of the poorer classes, and the Jews had shops in Swan Street where they sold millinery, haberdashery and suchlike. The plantations brought in most of their requirements direct from England and North America, both for themselves and their slaves, and the balance they purchased from importers.

The immense wealth of the Barbados planters of the eighteenth century is largely a myth. While the planters on the whole lived extravagantly, and on their fairly frequent visits to England spent lavishly, most of them were heavily in debt and were spending the proceeds of a crop of sugar that was not yet reaped, and possibly not yet grown. In spite of this they could always manage to educate their families in England. A few families such as the Alleyne's remained comfortably off into the nineteenth century, but it is difficult to name more than a handful of planter families who became wealthy and remained wealthy for more than two generations.

The eighteenth century witnessed some cultural developments in Barbados society, and the extracts from a local newspaper of the 1730s which were subsequently published in book form testify to its literary interests and a fairly high intellectual level. Of the small landowner, whether freeholder or freeman, very little is known, and he is hardly mentioned by contemporary writers; he seems to have become resigned to eking a meagre living from his holding. The lot of the slaves was no better than it had been in Ligon's day; in the case of many it may have been worse, because illtreatment was common, and there was no redress. On the credit-side, it is pleasant to find that sometimes a master was sufficiently appreciative of the service he had received from a slave to provide for his manumission in his will.

## THE POPULATION PROBLEM

Estimates of population given by contemporary writers point to a rapid growth in the early years of the settlement, and these have been generally accepted by historians, even though some of the figures, such,



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Admeasurement of the YLAND of  
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with the III<sup>e</sup> Names of the Seuerall plantations



for example, as Ligon's 50,000 white inhabitants and 100,000 negroes in 1650, are so patently absurd that they should have raised doubts as to the accuracy of the others. Recent research suggests that most previous estimates have been much too high and that by 1640 the population consisted of not more than 10,000 white persons and an insignificant number of African slaves. The importation of slaves began soon after this and continued on a vast scale until near the end of the eighteenth century, when the slave population reached a peak of about 70,000. The number of slaves is given as 60,000 in 1805 just before the abolition of the slave trade, and over 80,000 in 1834, when slavery itself was abolished. This suggests that owners paid more attention to the welfare of their slaves when they knew that replacement could only be by natural increase. The story of the white population is more complex.

There were three categories of white persons. Freeholders were those who owned not less than ten acres of land and thereby were qualified to vote and to stand for election to the House of Assembly. The other two categories were indentured servants and freemen, the latter usually being servants who had completed their indentures; they differed from freeholders in that they owned less than ten acres. With the introduction of the cultivation and manufacture of sugar, slaves began to replace white servants. The white population began to diminish between 1650-60 from a peak of rather over 20,000 persons. Each category was affected. The importation of indentured servants was reduced to a trickle, and servants who completed their indentures (usually after five years) and became freemen found it difficult to obtain employment or land to farm, and many of them returned to Britain or went to North America or other West Indian islands. Because sugar cultivation and manufacture was more profitable when done on a large scale, many of the small freeholders sold out their properties and also left the Island. As a result, the white population had dropped to 12,500 by 1712, whereas the number of slaves had risen to over 52,000.

We have reasonably accurate demographic information for the year 1680, and this shows that already over half the land in the Island was owned by about 175 planters. A hundred years later the same amount of land was in the hands of about 70 families, who between them almost monopolized all the higher offices; and even as late as 1871, when the census gave a total population of 161,594, the number of landed proprietors of sugar estates was only 170. This concentration of economic wealth and political power was a major factor in the economic and political development of the Island in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the eighteenth century Barbados had no real population problem, unless it was that there were insufficient white men available for service in the militia. White immigration was small, and almost all who came to the Island had employment awaiting them. The importation of slaves continued to be necessary, because the mortality rate was so high and the birth rate was so low that without replenishment the slave



population would have declined. With the abolition of the slave trade the rate of natural increase improved, and unlike some of the other West Indian islands, Barbados did not suffer a labour shortage when the African source of supply was cut off. On the contrary, since emancipation the size of her population has been one of the most serious problems with which the Island has had to contend.

According to census figures, the population increased from 122,000 to 152,000 inhabitants between 1844 and 1861, even though many Barbadians emigrated to other Caribbean territories and an estimated 20,000 died in the cholera outbreak of 1854. Already Barbados was probably the most densely populated agricultural community in the world, and before the end of the century the pressure of population was being felt acutely. Emigration was the only obvious solution. The first large-scale emigration was to Panama to work on the construction of the Canal. In more recent years there have been organized schemes to North America and Britain. For the moment the rate of emigration is reduced, but fortunately there is also a lowering of the birthrate. The population at the last census was below 240,000.

## DEFENCE

As has been mentioned already, the difficulty that sailing ships had in tacking against the wind gave Barbados a large measure of immunity from attack. A Dutch force under Admiral de Ruyter entered Carlisle Bay in 1665, but withdrew when the flagship was damaged by fire from the shore batteries, and an American privateer fired a few shots at Speightstown in the War of American Independence. These were the only occasions on which a foreign power committed hostile acts in Barbados territorial waters until a German submarine torpedoed a Canadian merchant ship in Carlisle Bay in 1942. Nevertheless, the danger of attack was always recognized and from the earliest days the Island had a militia, in which all able-bodied men were required to do duty. One of the functions of the militia was to man the chain of forts which extended from the southern point of the Island along the west coast to the northern tip. Only occasional traces of these forts now remain.

British troops were sent to Barbados from time to time in war, and there were frequent visits from British men-of-war, but it was not until 1780 that Britain maintained a garrison here, and not until the Napoleonic Wars that Barbados had a naval establishment. The two British naval commanders whose names are remembered in the West Indies are Rodney and Nelson, yet neither had any close connection with Barbados. Rodney's victory over the French Admiral de Grasse at the battle of the Saints (small islands between Dominica and Guadeloupe) in 1782 may have saved Barbados from occupation by the French. Nelson was based for several years on English Harbour, Antigua, and called at

Barbados in 1805 in the course of his fruitless pursuit of the French Admiral Villeneuve. Because he had visited Barbados so recently, and because the fleet under his command seemed to be all that stood in the way of a French attack, Nelson's death was felt keenly by the Barbadians, who subscribed to erect the statue of him that still stands in Trafalgar Square in Bridgetown.

The British garrison in Barbados was quartered in buildings erected for it close to St. Ann's Fort on the outskirts of Bridgetown. Built mostly of brick that was brought from England, and sited around a large open space that is now a race-course, the buildings form an entity that is one of the finest architectural treasures of the Island. The buildings were in full use for military purposes until the British garrison was withdrawn in 1905. At Gun Hill in the parish of St. George the army had a rest camp where soldiers could convalesce after the bouts of illness that were all too frequent in the early part of the nineteenth century.

## RELIGION

The first settlers brought their religion with them, and the Church of England became the Established Church of Barbados. For both religious and Local Government purposes parishes were established, each bearing the name of a saint except for the parish of Christ Church. At first there were six parishes, but within 25 years the number was raised to eleven, and at that figure it has remained; nor have the boundaries been changed. Each parish was provided with a parish church, and in the parish of St. Peter a second church, All Saints, was added, possibly because the parish church itself was at one corner of a hilly parish. Later supplementary churches, or chapels of ease, were built in other parishes as they were required. In Puritan times attendance at church on Sundays was obligatory. Each parish had its Vestry, consisting of and elected by the freeholders of the parish, and this was the Local Government body.

For almost 200 years Barbados had no bishop of its own, and was subject to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Bishop of London. In 1824 William Hart Coleridge was appointed Bishop of Barbados and the Leeward Islands, with a diocese comprising all British territory from Guiana in the south to the Virgin Islands in the north. The parish church of the metropolitan parish of St. Michael was elevated to a cathedral. The size of the diocese was reduced step by step, but it was not until 1927 that the responsibilities of the Bishop of Barbados were restricted to Barbados alone. In 1970 the Anglican Church in Barbados was disestablished and the clergy ceased to receive their emoluments from Government funds.

The Jews arrived in Barbados in the 1650s. The early immigrants were of Portuguese origin and came from Pernambuco in Brazil.

They were essentially traders, and before long there was a big concentration of them in Bridgetown. Most of them lived in Swan Street, which became known as Jew Street, and close by they had their synagogue and burial ground. They were intensely disliked, partly no doubt because they were shrewd businessmen and drove a hard bargain, and until the nineteenth century they were subject to civil disabilities. Their numbers dwindled and by the beginning of the present century Jewry was hardly represented in the Island.

Three nonconformist sects have figured prominently in the Island's history. In the seventeenth century Quakerism had a small following and received stimulus from a visit from George Fox himself. Quaker beliefs, such as their refusal to bear arms, made conflict with the civil power inevitable in a country where military service was compulsory, and the Quakers became subject to persecution and eventually disappeared. The Moravians arrived during the eighteenth century, and through the manner in which they worked they earned the respect of all sections of the population. The Methodists, who arrived later, had a less auspicious start. Their work, like that of the Moravians, was mainly among the slaves, but their methods antagonized the white population to such an extent that in 1823 a mob destroyed their chapel in Bridgetown and caused the missionary in charge to leave the Island. When another missionary took his place a few years later the atmosphere had changed, and the Methodist following grew rapidly, so that within twenty years its church membership ranked next after that of the Established Church.

## EDUCATION

Such facilities for education as existed in Barbados in the seventeenth century were rudimentary, and white children were usually sent to England to school. One of these was Christopher Codrington, son of a father of the same name. The young Christopher was educated at Oxford and was later for a while Governor of the Leeward Islands, a post from which he resigned to devote himself to literary pursuits. When he died in 1710 he left two estates in Barbados to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts for the foundation of a college. Codrington was buried in All Souls College, Oxford, to which he left his books, and also a legacy to build what is now the Codrington Library.

It was over a century before Codrington's aims were realized. In 1745 a grammar school was started, and in 1830 this became a college for higher education with particular emphasis on theology. Within a year the hurricane of 1831 had severely damaged the buildings, which took several years to repair. After many vicissitudes Codrington College is now a theological college for the training of clergy for the Anglican Church in

the West Indies.

Codrington's example was followed by Thomas Harrison, who in 1733 purchased land in Bridgetown and built a school which he handed over to trustees. Harrison College is still the Island's leading secondary school for boys.

With the abolition of slavery greater emphasis was placed on education, and the number of school places steadily increased; by the end of the nineteenth century almost 25,000 children were receiving at least a primary education. As a result of the policy of making primary education available to every child free of charge, there is now virtually no illiteracy in the Island, and for most of those who want it secondary and university education is available. The heavy emphasis placed on education has paid handsome dividends, and largely accounts for the high reputation that Barbados has for the political stability and maturity of its people.

## THE ROAD TO EMANCIPATION

The Quakers were the first body to come out publicly against slavery, when in 1761 the London Meeting passed a resolution that all slave owners and slave traders be expelled from the Society; but as Quakers were at the time almost non-existent in the West Indies the resolution attracted little attention. A much more important event was the celebrated judgement by the Chief Justice, Lord Mansfield, in 1772 that the state of slavery could not exist in England. This gave the Quakers the fillip they needed, and they took the initiative by forming an anti-slavery society, which soon attracted powerful support from outside their own ranks. The best-known name among the abolitionists is that of Samuel Wilberforce, a Member of Parliament and a close friend of the Prime Minister, William Pitt. The first objective was the abolition of the slave trade, and the assault was formally opened in a speech by Wilberforce in the House of Commons. Two circumstances contributed to delay the passing of the necessary legislation. The West Indian planters believed that their economy was dependent on a steady supply of slave labour from overseas, and the so-called West India interest in Britain used every weapon in its armoury to oppose abolition. In this it was fully supported by the ship-owners and others who derived a big income from the trade. The second reason for delay was political. Wilberforce's first resolution was introduced in the very month of the outbreak of the French Revolution. For the next fifteen years the anti-slavery issue was over-

shadowed by events on the European mainland, and the Government of the day was reluctant to pass a measure that might cause interference with badly needed supplies from its West Indian colonies.

The British Parliament eventually passed the law abolishing the slave trade in 1807. Denmark had legislated a few years earlier, but Britain was the first of the major powers to do so. Little more progress was made for the next fifteen years, but by this time there were growing signs of restlessness among the slaves, and trouble occurred in several colonies. In Barbados a slave rising in 1816 followed a false rumour that slaves were to be given their freedom. The rising was confined to a few parishes in the south-east and was quickly put down; but the writing was on the wall. In the 1820s the British Government pressed colonial legislatures to pass legislation to ameliorate the conditions of slaves, and such legislation, though not going quite as far as the British Government would have liked, was passed in Barbados in 1826. Slavery itself was abolished in 1834, but even then the slaves were granted only conditional freedom. They were required to work for their present masters for six years in the case of field slaves and four years in the case of others. The apprenticeship system, as it was called, was difficult to administer and was ended in 1838. In that year emancipation became a reality.

The abolition of slavery is one of the great landmarks in West Indian history, and it was inevitable that it should have important social, economic and political effects. In Barbados the changes that it brought about were fewer and more gradual than those elsewhere. Because there was virtually no land not already under cultivation, the problems caused elsewhere by the withdrawal of labour and the growth of a class of peasant proprietors hardly arose. Politically, the lowering of the parliamentary franchise occurred at an opportune moment and enabled Samuel Jackman Prescod to be elected as the first coloured Member of the House of Assembly. The black and coloured population, very few of whom yet possessed the vote, could not have had a better spokesman.

## AN INDUSTRIAL AGE

In 1815 Barbados entered a century of peace. Wars such as those in the Crimea, in India and in Africa did not concern her except in so far as Barbadians volunteered to serve in the armed forces of the mother country. For the Island the nineteenth century was a period of adjustment to the Industrial Revolution, as well as to the new state of things resulting from emancipation. The introduction of a regular steamship service between England and the West Indies in 1840, with Barbados as the headquarters of the service in the West Indies and the first port of call, meant that the Island could receive communications from England, and vice versa, in less than a fortnight. In 1872 this time was reduced to

a few hours when the first message was sent by submarine cable. In the course of the century Barbados acquired a public water supply, a gas-works, a telephone service and a railway. The latter, which operated between Bridgetown and Belleplaine in St. Andrew, eventually proved uneconomic and was discontinued in 1937.

## **SUGAR: THE STORY AFTER 1800**

For over 150 years Barbados had been a sugar island, and other crops such as cotton, ginger and aloes had made only a very small contribution to the national income. No major export crop had been found, nor has one yet been found which is so well suited to the Island's soil and climatic conditions and which brings such a good monetary return. But by 1800 the quantity of sugar produced had increased hardly at all, and a crop giving 10,000 tons was still exceptional. Such improvements as there were in cultivation and manufacture had apparently been offset by a general decline in fertility, and until the last few years of the eighteenth century Barbadians were growing the same type of cane as that which had originally been introduced from Brazil. In the nineteenth century there were to be important developments in the cultivation and manufacture of cane, but there were also to be marketing problems for the British West Indian sugar colonies as a whole. These will now be considered separately.

### **(a) PRODUCTION**

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century Captain Bligh brought to Jamaica from the Pacific a new variety of sugar cane known as the Bourbon cane. It reached Barbados in 1796, and within the next twenty years it resulted in a significant rise in sugar production. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century, however, that the real breakthrough occurred. The first major development was the use of guano as a fertiliser; the second, and even more important, was the discovery that cane could set viable seed and that new varieties could be bred. Unfortunately, shortly after this the Bourbon cane developed a disease and had to be discontinued. With the introduction of 'white transparent' cane a new era opened. In the first half of the present century research into cane breeding and into methods of cultivation were intensified. New varieties of cane, deeper cultivation, the use of large amounts of artificial fertilisers, and more efficient manufacturing technology, brought dramatic improvements, culminating in a crop yielding over 200,000 tons of sugar. Since then a lot of land previously under sugar cane has been converted to other use, and this process, which is continuing, and the burning of cane before it is reaped, make it unlikely that the high yields of the last twenty years will be achieved in future.

Factory improvements went hand in hand with improvements



in the field. The first steam plant was installed in Barbados before 1850, and by the end of the century there were a hundred in operation. In the last few years the factory side of the sugar industry has been rationalized, and the number of sugar factories has been reduced.

#### (b) MARKETING

Barbados had been the first West Indian territory to manufacture sugar for export. By the second half of the eighteenth century sugar was being produced in almost every island in the West Indies, and Barbados production represented only a small part of the whole. By far the largest producer was Saint-Domingue (Haiti), and when all sugar exports from there ceased after the slave revolution of 1791, Barbados shared in the benefits from the consequent rise in sugar prices. But already the West Indian monopoly of the sugar market was being threatened by the East Indies and Mauritius, where costs were lower, and by beet sugar, which was beginning to be produced in Europe. At first the West Indies were given some protection by Britain, which imposed higher duties on sugar from other producing countries. The respite was short-lived. In the 1820s Britain moved from a protectionist to a free trade policy, and by the middle of the century duties on British and foreign sugar had been equalized.

This was not all. The production of beet sugar had become an important industry in several European countries, and in order to enable it to compete with the cheaper cane sugar the Governments of those countries paid bounties on exports and restricted internal consumption by heavy duties. The battle over the sugar bounties continued throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, and meanwhile economic distress in the West Indies increased. The person mainly responsible for breaking the impasse was the British statesman, Joseph Chamberlain. A Royal Commission visited the West Indies in 1896-97, and eventually a convention between sugar-producing countries was signed in 1902. The British Government granted £250,000 to West Indian Governments towards the cost of rehabilitating the sugar industry, and of this Barbados received £80,000. The money formed the nucleus of the capital of a Sugar Industry Agricultural Bank.

The first World War caused a rise in sugar prices, but these fell again in the 1920s and reached a record low figure by 1930. The outbreak of war in 1939, as so often in the past, rescued the industry. When hostilities ended the British Government recognized that the West Indian sugar industry could not survive in a free market, since much of the world's sugar came from countries with lower production costs, and some of it benefited from indirect subsidies, such as low taxation. The outcome of discussions was the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement of 1951.

Under this Barbados has a guaranteed market in the United Kingdom for a certain quantity of sugar annually; part of it is at a price, negotiated from time to time, based on production costs; the balance is at the world price. With Britain's entry into the European Economic Community this Agreement comes to an end, and Barbados and the other Commonwealth sugar-producing countries must now negotiate direct with the Community.

## BARBADOS AND FEDERATION

Throughout its history Barbados has always had its own Governor and its own Government. At times the Governor has had additional responsibilities. In the seventeenth century he was for a time also Governor of the Leeward Islands; at the beginning of the nineteenth century a succession of Governors also held the office of Commander-in-Chief of the military forces in the area; and from 1837 the Governors of Barbados were also Governors of the Windward Islands and Tobago, though in practice the administration was in the hands of Lieutenant-Governors, and the Governor of Barbados paid only infrequent visits. Barbados did not object to this arrangement; on the contrary, it may even have welcomed it as emphasizing the superior position of the Island over its neighbours.

In 1875 John Pope Hennessy was appointed Governor of Barbados, a post which carried with it, as in the case of his predecessors, responsibility for the Windward Islands and Tobago. Before he left England he had discussed with the British Government the possibility of a confederation of these islands with Barbados, a scheme which had been mooted several years previously. He had been warned to proceed with caution. Caution was not a word in Pope Hennessy's vocabulary. He was an Irishman of short stature, and there was a streak of eccentricity in his make-up. In Barbados he quickly antagonized the white population and endeared himself to the black population. The former were loud in their complaints to the Colonial Office and demanded his recall; the latter believed that the confederation for which he was working would yield them material benefits, and that it was the white population who were attempting to deny them these benefits. In April 1876 riots broke out. They lasted less than a week and the casualties were eight negroes killed and thirty wounded. Before the end of the year Pope Hennessy left Barbados on transfer to Hong Kong and the confederation issue was quickly forgotten. It was not to be revived for fifty years.

The possibility of some form of closer association of the West Indian colonies was broached again in the 1920s, and though a conference was held it produced no concrete results. After the last war the matter was once again revived, and in 1947 a conference presided over by the

Secretary of State for the Colonies was held at Montego Bay, Jamaica, and was attended by the Government leaders of all the British territories in the Caribbean. There was agreement in principle on the desirability of closer association, and a powerful Standing Committee was set up to give the matter detailed study. This finally resulted in the establishment of a Federation of the West Indies in 1958. The Federation lasted just three years; it collapsed in 1961 when Jamaica, after a referendum, decided to withdraw and seek separate independence.

The reasons for failure are complex. The basic reason was probably that none of the units were sufficiently committed to the federal principle to be prepared to give up any of their sovereign powers. Of the political leaders, only Sir Grantley Adams from Barbados among the larger territories was willing to enter federal politics. The Federal Government had no independent source of revenue, nor at the time of the Federation's demise did it exercise real power in any sphere except that of running its own machine.

Since then a fresh start has been made, this time largely on the initiative of Mr. Errol Barrow, Prime Minister of Barbados. In 1965 the Commonwealth territories in the Caribbean formed a free trade area, known for short as CARIFTA, and in 1973 this has been carried a stage further by the formation of a Caribbean Community, which will have as a start a common external Customs tariff. The foundation members of this body are the four larger territories, but most of the members of CARIFTA have stated their intention of joining at a later date.

## THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH

After three hundred years perhaps the most remarkable thing about Barbados was the extent to which it had resisted change. All political and economic power remained firmly in the hands of the white population, and the Island's leading white families still dominated, as they had done through the centuries, the two Houses of the Legislature, the Vestries and the plethora of central and local government boards. Until the twentieth century only two persons not of white descent had made any mark in public affairs. The name of Samuel Jackman Prescod, the son of a white father and a coloured mother, has already been mentioned. As a journalist and a legislator he championed the cause of the under-privileged, but his was a lone voice; there did not exist at the time any black persons of sufficient education and stature to join him in the struggle. Sir Conrad Reeves, who was of pure African descent, was a lawyer and a statesman rather than a politician; he is remembered as the leader of the opposition to federation in 1876, as the person who proposed the Executive Committee Bill of 1881, and as the first black man to be appointed Chief Justice of a British colony.

It was not until the 1920s that the people of Barbados became aware of signs of political awakening among the black population. The pioneer was a doctor, Charles Duncan O'Neal, who in 1924 returned to his native land and dedicated himself to the political education of his black countrymen. By this time there were other black intellectuals in Barbados, and a political organization, the Democratic League, was formed. At first independent of O'Neal, but working towards the same goal, was a black lawyer, Grantley Adams. His election to the House of Assembly in 1934, exactly one hundred years after emancipation, gave the black population their first real spokesman in the Legislature since Prescod three quarters of a century before. It is interesting that the three persons whose likenesses appear on the first currency notes issued by the Barbados Central Bank are Prescod, O'Neal and Adams.

With the advantage of hindsight, it is astonishing that the riots of 1937 were not foreseen; but then the same is true of the French Revolution. All the portents pointed to trouble, and yet when trouble came it sent waves of shock throughout the West Indies and roused the British Government from a state of lethargy. Signs of unrest showed themselves a year or two earlier in several West Indian islands, but it was not until the riots of 1937, particularly those in Barbados and Trinidad, that the true seriousness of the position was appreciated. In Barbados the spark that started the conflagration was the deportation of a man who had been "holding public meetings and talking about the poor people in the Island". The riots were soon over, leaving 14 dead and 47 injured, and a lot of property damaged or destroyed. Trinidad had a similar casualty list.

The Royal Commission under the chairmanship of Lord Moyce that was appointed to investigate the cause of the riots spent several months in the West Indies, much of the time in listening to evidence from all sections of the population. This opportunity for a catharsis was most valuable; the fact that somebody was prepared to listen to their case and hold out some hope that their grievances would be redressed did much to destroy the legacy of hatred and distrust on the part of the black population that the riots had left behind them.

The troubles were easy to diagnose; they derived from the low wages and the poor living conditions of the labouring classes, and they were basically social rather than political. The Commission's principal recommendation was greatly increased expenditure on social services and development; and since the colonies themselves could not afford this, the Commission proposed that much of it should be borne by the British Government by way of grants to be administered by an organisation established in the West Indies by the British Government for the purpose. This recommendation was quickly implemented, and in the following years substantial assistance was given, in grants and loans and technical advice, to all West Indian colonies through the Colonial Development and Welfare Organisation, which had its headquarters in Barbados.

Political change kept pace with social and economic change. In 1942 Grantley Adams was appointed a Member of the Executive Committee, and in the following year the franchise was reduced from an income of £50 to £20 a year, and women were made eligible for the vote and for membership of the House of Assembly. The pendulum was swinging with increasing momentum. Representative government was succeeded by responsible government, with only minimal reserve powers remaining with the Governor, and black men and women were occupying most of seats in the Legislature and of the posts in the Government and Civil Service. The goal of independence was in sight. When independence did come on November 30th, 1966, nobody doubted that Barbados was ready for it. Her political maturity and political stability had been acquired in over 300 years of running her own affairs without dependence on outside financial assistance, and she had people well qualified to manage her affairs and to play their part on the international scene. Her high literacy rate - free education is in the process of becoming compulsory education - is an assurance that this will continue to be so. Great though the changes have been which have taken place in the social and political field, there is no desire for change merely for the sake of change. No voices have been raised in favour of a republic, for example, and the Queen of England is still also Queen of Barbados.

If the Island had remained dependent on sugar alone, her people could never have achieved a higher standard of living. Barbados possesses a good climate, good bathing beaches and good recreational facilities, and since the last war tourism has developed to rival sugar as the main source of income. At the same time great strides have been made in the establishment of light industries to provide employment for the increasing number of school leavers entering the labour market. By the building of a deepwater harbour and an international airport, both of which are now being expanded to meet increasing traffic, and by heavy expenditure on public utilities and social services, including a National Insurance scheme, the Island's infrastructure has been further strengthened to meet the problems that lie ahead.

Thirty years ago Barbados was little known to the world at large. Today, with so many thousands visiting her shores every year, this is less true. Nevertheless her present fame rests not on her history, nor on her beaches and climate. It rests on her cricketers. The Barbadians are quite content that this should be so.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

There are three books on Barbados history written before the middle of the nineteenth century which have reprinted in recent years. Though they are unavailable at the time of writing, further reprints are likely to be made shortly. The books are:-

- Richard Ligon, *A True & Exact History of the Island of Barbados* (1657)  
John Poyer, *The History of Barbados from the First Discovery of the island in the year 1605 till the Accession of Lord Seaforth, 1801* (1808)  
Robert H. Schomburgk, *The History of Barbados* (1848)

Ligon's book is fascinating reading and is an invaluable source of information for conditions in Barbados at the time. Poyer's History has been largely superseded by Schomburgk's book, which covers a wider field and is still the standard history of the Island up to the time it was written.

There is no single work dealing with the period after 1847. F.A. Hoyos has written a number of monographs, of which *Barbados, Our Island Home and Builders of Barbados* are still in print.

Ronald Tree's *History of Barbados*, published in 1972, is short and readable. It is written primarily for the benefit of visitors and includes suggested day-tours to places of interest.

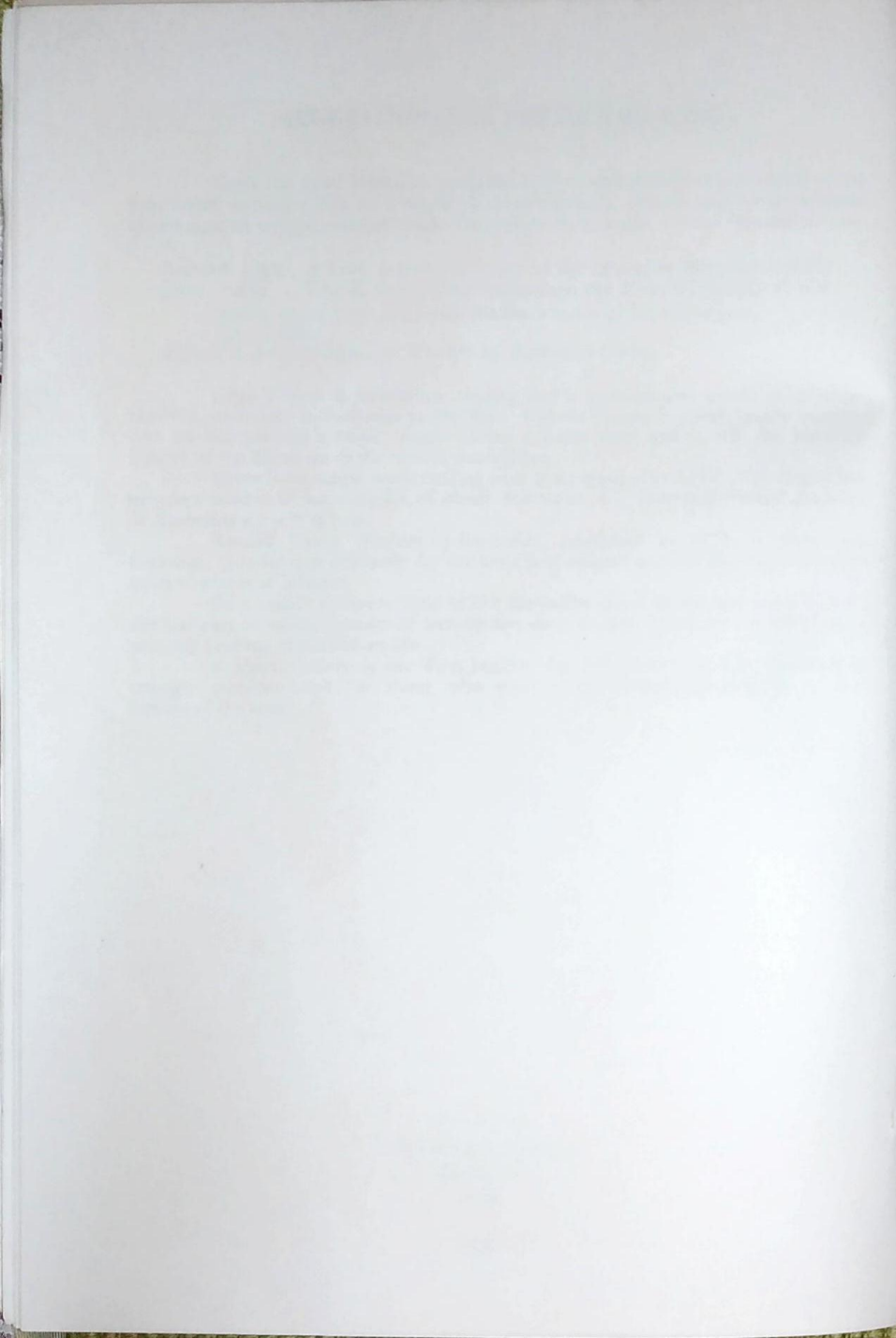
Of a rather different kind is *The Barbados Book* by the late Louis Lynch, the last part of which consists of twenty-two short stories, which are unrivalled as an amusing account of Barbadian life.

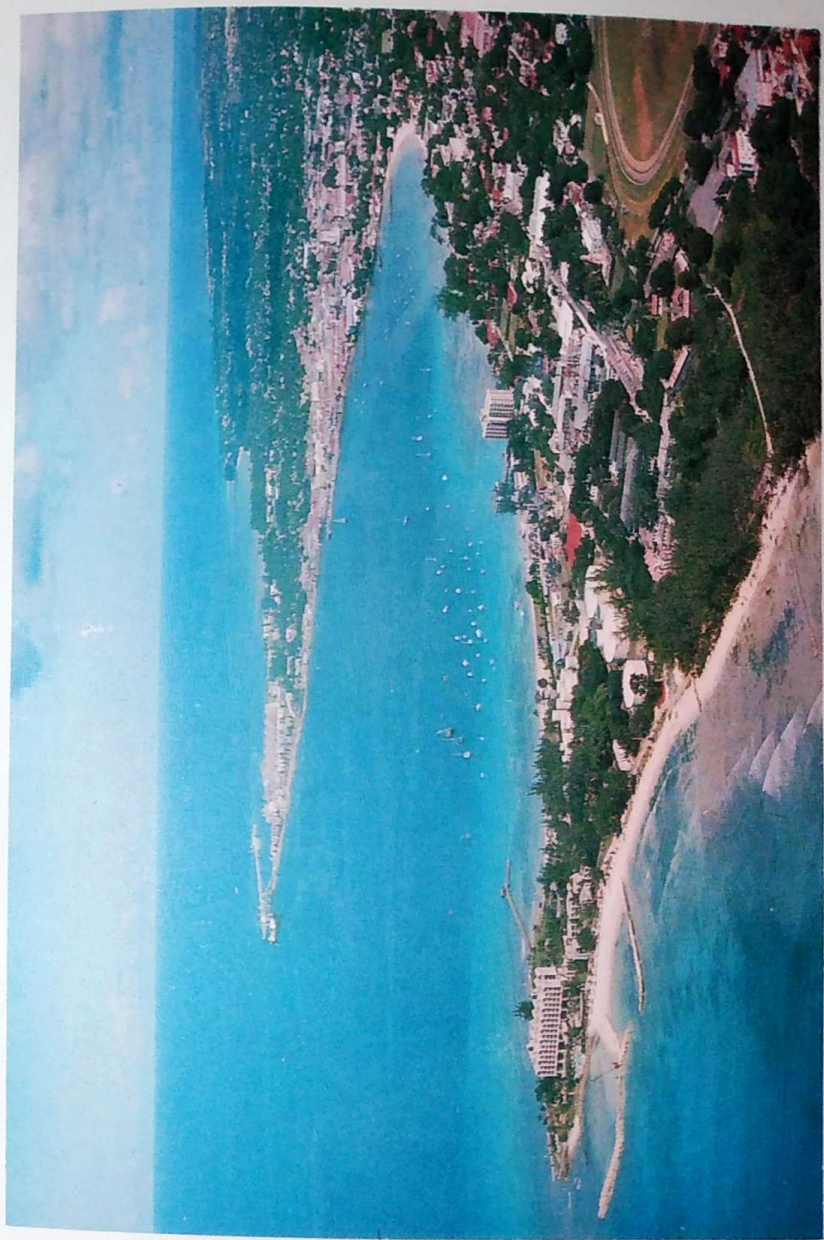
*A Short History of the West Indies* by J.H. Parry and P.M. Sherlock is strongly recommended for those who want a well-written introduction to the history of the area.

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